

THE AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY

Presentation at the Panel on the China's Foreign Policy After Mao

==26 May 1978== CCC/RSPacS., ANU

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Just after our arrangement for this Panel, quite impressive incidents have occurred between China and Japan and China and the Soviet Union. Needless to say, these were China's demonstration of territorial claims over the Senkaku Islands for five days with about 200 armed fishing boats mid last month, and the Soviet infringement on China's territory with one helicopter acroassing the border river Wusuli early this month.

As to the former, China officially explained that her fishing fleet had entered the Senkaku area "by accident." On the basis of the specific characteristics of this affair, we can not accept the Chinese explanation that it happened "by accident," but we can presume the Chinese intention to a certain extent and shed light on the bases of China's present policy towards Japan. On the other hand, in the latter case, Peking lodged a strong protest with Moscow denouncing the border violation as an intentional military provocation against China and the Chinese subsequently voiced dissatisfaction with the official Soviet explanation. Although Moscow's statement contained an apology for this incident making the excuse ~~that~~ helicopter lost it's way.

In my opinion, these two incidents and their aftermaths are very symbolic paradigms of the basic tendencies in Sino-Japanese relations and in Sino-Soviet relations at the present stage. Roughly speaking, Peking still continues her hostile policy towards Moscow and ~~which~~ is still very keen to strengthen Sino-Japanese relations despite China's recent protests against a Japanese bill implementing the Japan-South Korea continental shelf agreement. In particular, Peking is very concious of her own strategical interests in an early conclusion of the long pending Japan~~ese~~-China Treaty of Peace and Friendship which includes the so-called anti-hegemony clause. On the other hand, Moscow is still anxious to seize an opportunity to improve Sino-Soviet relations,

These are my impressions of these recent events.

By the way, as to Sino-Soviet relations, as long as China's internal politics remain in the transition period after Mao's death, the successors to Mao's line will have to be very sensitive and worried about any deviation from Mao's basic doctrine. However seen from longer term perspective, we must presume considerable capability for change in the relation between China and the Soviet Union. ~~From now~~ By longer term perspective, I mean Two-to-three years or most within five years. Why? ——— To answer this question, I must present some theoretical framework for analysis.

According to my assessment, the Sino-Soviet conflict is a composite of four levels of confrontation. These are nation-to-nation; state-to-state; party-to-party and government-to-government. Roughly speaking, the first, nation-to-nation, is a confrontation of two distinct nationalisms. The second, state-to-state, is a confrontation between national interests, the third, party-to-party, is ideological — a conflict over doctrinal orthodoxy, and the forth, government-to-government, involves diplomatic relationships.

Of these four levels of confrontation, the nation-to-nation conflict is the most deeply and historically rooted. The state-to-state conflict became a serious and incompatible confrontation in every phase of the relationship between the two states from early 20th century. But the third level, party-to-party is a variable factor in the confrontation structure. This, in turn, means that ideological conflict will be affected one way or the other by the outcome of the intraparty struggle or by changes in party's basic line. The fourth level, government-to-government, is most superficial confrontation, and is the level most subject to internal political changes or changes in the international environment at that time. With the passing of Mao, the possibility of a restoration on this level can be foreseen theoretically.

In addition, not only this level, but on the party-to-party level, we should consider the possibility of basic change with the progress of de-Maoization. This is the reason why the anti-Soviet perceptions of the leaders of the so-called "people in authority" (当权派) faction, like Teng Hsiao-p'ing and ~~xx~~, for example, Lo Jui-ch'ing in the PLA, are basically different from Mao's feelings of antagonism and resentment towards the Soviet Union. The attitudes towards Moscow of these leaders who recently fully recovered their political influences in the CCP, could easily become more policy-oriented in the future. In this respect, when the Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship, Alliance and Assistance of 1950 will expire in coming 1980 after a term of thirty years, what kind of choice will be open to the Chinese leaders? It may become very interesting turning point in Sino-Soviet relations.

My above mentioned point of view may be controversial and a little bit provocative, but to stimulate fruitful discussion, I ventured to present my own frank opinions.

Thank you very much.